

Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee

February 25, 2015

S.B. 942: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION.

Good afternoon, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Danuta Thibodeau and I am the Executive Director of EDUCATION CONNECTION, the Regional Education Service Center serving thirty (30) school districts in northwestern Connecticut.

I am here to express my deep concern on the proposed change to Sec. 16 of S.B. 942. The proposed change would restrict funding for Interdistrict Cooperative Programs to the Sheff region and would eliminate funding for these crucial programs in all non-Sheff regions of the state. In addition, the funds being made available to support Interdistrict Cooperative Programs have been reduced by 50%. While we applaud and support the State's commitment to ensure equal access to resources for students in the Sheff region, we believe that all students should have the same opportunity to participate in interdistrict programs. The proposed change to Sec. 16 would be especially detrimental for students in the northwestern region of the state.

The academic enrichment programs supported by Interdistrict Cooperative funding are often the only opportunity our students have to interact in a meaningful way with diverse students from other districts to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation while enhancing academic achievement. Currently, 32 Interdistrict Programs are funded in our region, with over 9,000 students from our 30 school districts and a number of school districts outside of our region participating.

The Interdistrict Cooperative Programs help to break down the racial, ethnic, and economic isolation barriers that challenge students in our remote geographic area of the state, and importantly cultivate multicultural understanding and respect for diversity in our youth. The proposed change in language in S.B. 942, Sec. 16, would eliminate ALL Interdistrict Cooperative Program funding outside of the Sheff region, which means the elimination of these programs so vital to the cultural and academic development of K-12 students throughout our region.

I respectfully request that the language in Sec. 16 not be amended as proposed, and that the existing language in Sec. 16 of S.B. 942 be restored and funding for Interdistrict Cooperative Programs for non-Sheff areas also be restored.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Danuta Thibodeau, Ph.D.
Executive Director of EDUCATION CONNECTION



**EDUCATION CONNECTION Region
Interdistrict Cooperative Program Data
2013-2014**

EDUCATION CONNECTION INTERDISTRICT PROGRAMS	
Number of Districts Served	30
Number of Towns Served	34 Barkhamsted, Bethel, Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Danbury, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Middlebury, Morris, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Norfolk, North Canaan, Plymouth, Redding, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Sherman, Southbury, The Gilbert School, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Watertown, Winchester, Woodbury
Number of Interdistrict Programs	25
Number of Students Eligible to Participate	6,621
Number of Districts Outside of Our Region	30 Berlin, Bloomfield, Bridgeport, East Haven, East Hartford, Fairfield, Farmington, Hamden, Hartford, Meriden, Milford, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, Newington, Norwalk, Oxford, Region 16, Shelton, Simsbury, Stafford, Stratford, Stonington, Tolland, Trumbull, Vernon, Waterbury, West Haven, Windsor, Windsor Locks
Number of Hartford Students Eligible to Participate	286

INTERDISTRICT PROGRAMS IN OUR RESC REGION Provided By Other Organizations/Districts	
Number of Interdistrict Programs	7
Number of Students Eligible to Participate	2577
Number of Hartford Students Eligible to Participate	128



**Interdistrict Cooperative Grants
Current Participation 2013 - 2015
Districts In Our Region**

[illegible]



**Current Participation 2013-2015
Districts Outside of our Region**

[illegible]